

Panel Probe Of Panther Cases Urged

By William Greider

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Nine congressmen called on President Nixon yesterday to extend the life of the National Commission on Violence so that it can investigate "the unanswered questions" surrounding the police slaying of two Black Panther leaders in Chicago.

The 13-member commission, appointed last year to study violence in the nation after the assassination of Sen. Robert F. Kennedy, is scheduled to go out of business at midnight tonight. Its final report is scheduled for release this weekend.

Neither the White House nor the commission had any immediate comment on the request, but officials of the commission said it seems highly unlikely that the panel would continue to function.

In a letter to Commission Chairman Milton S. Eisenhower, the nine congressmen said an impartial investigation of last Thursday's pre-dawn shoot-out that took the lives of Illinois Black Panthers Fred Hampton and Mark Clark might reduce racial "suspicion and distrust" surrounding the incident.

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Extension Of Violence Unit Urged

VIOLENCE, From A1

The congressmen's telegram to President Nixon, asking his approval for the investigation, said the Chicago shoot-out was "a very serious incident . . . and one with possible frightening ramifications for the nation. We fear that the terrifying shoot-out in Los Angeles yesterday indicates that we are already beginning to reap a harvest of violence."

The Los Angeles incident early Monday morning involved a police raid and gun fight in which three Panthers and three policemen were wounded and 11 Panthers were arrested. Police-Panther encounters have occurred in other cities in recent months.

The congressmen calling for an investigation are all Democrats and include five of the nine Negro representatives. The signers were Reps. Shirley Chisholm and William F. Ryan of New York City, Don Edwards of San Jose and Augustus F. Hawkins of Los Angeles, Calif., John Conyers Jr. of Detroit, Louis Stokes of Cleveland, William Clay of St. Louis, Abner Mikva of Chicago, and Robert W. Kastenmeir of Watertown, Wis.

They warned that the Chicago shoot-out has the "potential for exacerbating already strained relations between blacks and whites in many communities."

The commission, they said, could produce "an objective, thoroughly reliable and completely credible report on what actually happened in the Hampton apartment on December 4."

The police who participated in the raid have said they fired on the occupants only after they were fired upon first. The police had a search

warrant and found a cache of arms in the apartment where Hampton died.

The congressmen noted, however, that witnesses at the scene say it appeared that Hampton was killed while he was still in bed and that a private autopsy seems to indicate that Hampton was in a reclining position when the bullets entered his body. "In Chicago and throughout the nation," the congressmen said, "people both black and white are disturbed about the unanswered questions."

In its 18-month study, the commission on violence has had five investigations done on specific incidents of disorder. The most controversial was the Walker Report which surveyed the street violence surrounding the 1968 Democratic Convention in Chicago and concluded that a "police riot" was involved.

The other investigations covered the riot in Miami, during the Republican convention, the 1968 Glenville shoot-out in Cleveland, campus disorders at San Francisco State College last year, and attempted disruptions at the Inaugural parade in Washington earlier this year.

A spokesman for the commission said there were numerous requests for other investigations of local incidents, but the commission tried to limit the number of inquiries.

The commission was first appointed for a one-year study by President Johnson, but it fell behind its work schedule. On June 10 of this year, President Nixon granted a six-month extension, which expires tonight. The commission spokesman said its staff is already largely disassembled, anticipating the end of the study.